

## **CALFED Bay-Delta Program**

### **Ecosystem Review Team**

#### **Purpose**

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program is developing a comprehensive set of alternatives which, among other benefits, are intended to recover the ecological health of the Bay-Delta System. The solutions being developed are complex and in many situations unique. There is incomplete understanding of the biological and physical processes which occur in the Bay-Delta System. As such, development of reasonable alternatives will require some reliance on professional judgment and experience. While reasonable alternatives must ultimately rely on monitoring and adaptive management to refine and adjust actions, the initial alternatives must represent the best current knowledge available to address the problems identified.

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program has initiated formation of an Ecosystem Review Team (ERT) comprised of experts from CALFED agencies to expand and supplement the ecosystem expertise of program staff and consultants. The ERT will have four basic functions: 1) assist in the development of an ecosystem vision(s), 2) assist in the development of core ecosystem and environmental actions which should be considered common to all alternatives, 3) assist staff in balancing and fine-tuning Program alternatives, and 4) participate in the development of near-term ecosystem health actions for the purpose of guiding funding decisions under Category III of the Water Quality Protection Plan.

#### **Process**

The Ecosystem Review Team will begin its efforts by meeting in functional subgroups as shown on the attached list. These subgroups will be utilized to develop strategies to address specific issues and regions within the Bay-Delta System for use in alternative formation. These groups will also evaluate and fine-tune specific actions within preliminary alternatives. Subsequently, a full ERT (also attached) will evaluate alternatives for broader ecosystem balance, and to assist in developing a longer-term vision, as well as short-term ecosystem health objectives for utilization in the Category III program.

#### **Schedule**

The ERT subgroups are expected to complete the majority of their work by February 1, 1996. The overall ERT will continue review and refinement of the alternatives and core actions through February, and development of short-term ecosystem health objectives by mid-March. A public meeting of the group in mid- to late-March to discuss its findings has been considered, although not formally scheduled at this time.

#### **Attachments**